

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An apparatus comprising a Spacer at
spacer and a connecting device ~~devices~~ which ~~are~~ is adapted to connect a discharge
device ~~devices~~ (2) to a package ~~packages~~ (3) with liquid products (4), ~~preferably~~
~~foodstuff products,~~ for discharging said products (4) from the package ~~packages~~ (3),

wherein the ~~packages~~ package (3) ~~has~~ have walls (8) of synthetic material,

wherein the connecting device (1) is adapted to permit products (4) to flow therethrough from the package (3) to the discharge device (2),

wherein the connecting device (1) comprises a tube member (23) which is provided on a first wall portion (8a) of the walls of the package (3),

wherein the connecting device (1) comprises a connecting means (26) which ~~can be~~ is fixed to the tube member (23), and

wherein the spacer (19) is provided on the connecting means (26) and adapted to be located in the package (3) in order to, during emptying of said package, keep wall portions thereof at a distance from the connecting device (1) such that said wall portions do not prevent or substantially obstruct emptying of the package,

~~characterized in~~

~~that~~ the spacer (19) has resilient properties,

the connecting device (1) includes a tubular member (14) which is fixed to the connecting means (26).

~~that~~ the connecting means (26), for fixation thereof to the tube member (23), ~~can be~~ is brought to cooperate therewith by means of the tubular member (14) of the connecting device (1) such that ~~it~~ the tube member (23) is pressed downwards ~~moves~~ with the connecting means (26) in a direction towards a support (29) on which the package (3) is placed with a second wall portion (8b) thereof,

~~that~~ the spacer (19) by said downward pressing ~~can be~~ is brought to engage the support (29) through the second wall portion (8b) such that said spacer (19) at continued downward pressing is compressed from a normal shape (NF) to a compressed shape (KF),

~~that~~ the tube member (23) ~~has~~ having a space (28) in which the spacer (19) ~~can be~~ is received when it is compressed and in which it is accommodated in compressed shape (KF),

~~that~~ the connecting means (26) ~~can be~~ being fixed to the tube member (23) when said connecting means (26) is pressed downwards relative to the tube member (23) and said tube member (23) engages the support (29) through said second wall portion (8b), and

~~that~~ the spacer (19) is being provided to spring back to its normal shape (NF) when the downward pressing of the connecting means (26) and the tube member (23) ceases such that said spacer (19) can take up a distance keeping position.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in that the tube member (23) has an annular application surface (30) which can be applied close or substantially close to the second wall portion (8b) when the connecting means (26) and the tube member (23) are pressed in a direction towards the support (29), such that said application surface (30), in cooperation with the second wall portion (8b), prevents or at least obstructs atmospheric air from penetrating into the package (3) through the tube member (23) and contaminating the product (4) in the package (3).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in
that the spacer (19) and the second wall portion (8b) cooperate with each other such that the second wall portion (8b) compress the spacer (19) when said second wall portion (8b) is pressed against said spacer (19) during deflation or contraction of the package (3) due to generation of a negative pressure therein when product (4) is discharged therefrom, and

that the spacer (19) brings back the second wall portion (8b) by springing back when said suction or contraction force acting on the second wall portion (8b) ceases such that said second wall portion (8b), during discharge of product (4) from the package (3), performs pump movements which affect the product (4) such that discharge thereof is facilitated.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of ~~Spacer according to~~
claim 1, characterized in

that the spacer (19) includes annular parts (31) which are arranged in
stagger and connected with each other through connecting members (32) having
resilient properties, and

that the spacer (19) is compressible and expands in axial directions
relative to the annular parts (31).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of ~~Spacer according to~~
claim 1, characterized in that the connecting means (26) can be fixed to the tube
member (23) through a snap-in connection therewith.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of ~~Spacer according to~~
claim 1 ~~claim 6~~, characterized in that the tubular member (14) can be fixed to the
connecting means (26) while the connecting means (26) and the tube member (23)
are pressed downwards in a direction towards the support (29) or by continue to
press the tubular member (14) in a direction towards the support (29) when the tube
member (23) engages said support (29) through the second wall portion (8b).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1 ~~claim 6~~, characterized in that the tubular member (14), by pressing thereof against a closing member (13) on the connecting means (26) and in a direction towards the support (29), penetrates said closing member (13) and can be pressed, e.g. by a snap-in action, onto the connecting means (26) when said connecting means (26) has been fixed to the tube member (23) and said tube member (23) is sup. ported by the support (29) through the second wall portion (8b).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 7, characterized in that the tubular member (14), by pressing thereof against a closing member (13) on the connecting means (26) and in a direction towards the support (29), penetrates said closing member (13) and can be pressed, e.g. by a snap-in action, onto the connecting means (26) when the connecting means (26) and the tube member (23) are pressed in a direction towards the support (29) but before said connecting means (26) is fixed to said tube member (23).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in

that the connecting means (26) has a hole (11) and a member (13) closing said hole (11), and

that the closing member (13) can be penetrated by means of the tubular member (14).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 10, characterized in

that the closing member (13) is inclined relative to a geometric axial centre line (CL) of the hole (11) such that it defines a deep part (35) which is eccentric relative to the centre line (CL) of the hole (11),

that the tubular member (14) has an end edge (36) which is inclined relative to a geometric axial centre line (CL) of the tubular member (14) and forms a tip or point (37) which is eccentric relative to said centre line (CL), and

that the tip or point (37) is provided to be guided into said deep part (35) when the tubular member (14) is inserted into the hole (11).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 10, characterized in

that the tubular member (14) can be inserted into the hole (11) and pressed onto edge portions (16) of the hole (11) such that the tubular member (14) adheres to said edge portions (16) and such that connecting members (9, 10) of the connecting device (1) adhere close to each other,

that the hole (11) in the first connecting member (9) has four, five or six corners (15) and edge portions (16) which extend between said corners (15),

that the tubular member (14) of the second connecting member (10) has a corresponding number of corners (17) and edge portions (18) extending therebetween,

that the edge portions (16) of the hole (11), relative to straight geometric lines (L16) which connect adjacent corners (15) between the edge portions (16) of the hole (11) with each other, are inwardly directed and/or include parts which are inwardly directed towards the centre (C1) of the hole, and

that the edge portions (18) of the tubular member (14), relative to straight geometric lines (L18) which connect adjacent corners (17) between the edge portion (18) of the tubular member (14) with each other, are inwardly directed and/or include parts which are inwardly directed towards the centre (C2) of the tubular member (14).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 12, characterized in that the edge portions (16 and 18 respectively) of the hole (11) and the tubular member (14) respectively, are concave and arcuate relative to the centre (C1 and C2 respectively) of said hole (11) and said tubular member (14).

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 12, characterized in that the edge portions (16 and 18 respectively) of the hole (11) and the tubular member (14) respectively, are uniform.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 12, characterized in that the first connecting member (9) is provided on the package (3) such that the edge 35 portions (16) of its hole (11) has a certain orientation relative to the package (3).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in that the connecting means (26) includes a connecting portion (26b) for direct connection and fixation to the tube member (23) and that the connecting means (26) is a tube having a through passage (26c).

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in that the first and the second connecting member (9, 10) respectively, ~~consists of~~ comprises elastic material or has at least at the hole (11) and the tubular member (14) respectively, elastic material.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in that the first and second connecting member (9, 10) ~~consists of~~ comprise synthetic material.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The apparatus of Spacer according to claim 1, characterized in that the package (3) ~~consists of~~ comprises flexible material and is designed as a plastic bag.

Claim 20 (New): An apparatus comprising a spacer and a connecting device which is adapted to connect a discharge device (2) to a package (3) with liquid products (4) for discharging said products (4) from the package (3),

wherein the package (3) has walls (8) of synthetic material,

wherein the connecting device (1) is adapted to permit products (4) to flow therethrough from the package (3) to the discharge device (2),

wherein the connecting device (1) comprises a tube member (23) which is provided on a first wall portion (8a) of the walls of the package (3),

wherein the connecting device (1) comprises a connecting means (26) including a connecting portion (26b) for direct connection and fixation to the tube member (23), the connecting means (26) comprising a tube having a through passage (26c), and

wherein the spacer (19) is provided on the connecting means (26) and adapted to be located in the package (3) in order to, during emptying of said package, keep wall portions thereof at a distance from the connecting device (1) such that said wall portions do not prevent or substantially obstruct emptying of the package,

the spacer (19) has resilient properties,

the connecting means (26), for fixation thereof to the tube member (23), is brought to cooperate therewith such that it moves with the connecting means (26) in a direction towards a support (29) on which the package (3) is placed with a second wall portion (8b) thereof,

the spacer (19) by said downward pressing is brought to engage the support (29) through the second wall portion (8b) such that said spacer (19) at continued downward pressing is compressed from a normal shape (NF) to a compressed shape (KF),

the tube member (23) having a space (28) in which the spacer (19) is received when it is compressed and in which it is accommodated in compressed shape (KF),

the connecting means (26) being fixed to the tube member (23) when said connecting means (26) is pressed downwards relative to the tube member (23) and said tube member (23) engages the support (29) through said second wall portion (8b), and

the spacer (19) being provided to spring back to its normal shape (NF) when the downward pressing of the connecting means (26) and the tube member (23) ceases such that said spacer (19) can take up a distance keeping position.